

CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING**APPROVED Meeting Minutes****May 12, 2005****Boise, ID**

A regular meeting of the Idaho Charter School Commission was held on May 12, 2005 in the Lookout Room at Boise State University in Boise, Idaho. Chairman Hammond presided. The following members were present:

Marianne Donnelly
Bill Goesling
Esther Van Wart

Jim Hammond
Kirk Miller

Ann Souza
Paul Powell

The open meeting convened at 8 a.m.

1. Commission Work**a) Agenda Approval**

There were no suggested changes to the agenda as submitted.

b) Rolling Calendar

Commissioner Goesling suggested that the December 15 meeting date be changed. After discussion, December 7th starting at noon was decided upon.

M/S (Souza/Goesling): To approve Thursday, October 27 and Wednesday, December 7th as the dates and Boise State University as the location for upcoming regularly scheduled Commission meetings. *Motion passed unanimously.*

c) Minutes Approval

M/S (Donnelly/Van Wart): To approve the minutes from April 13-14, 2005 as submitted. *Motion passed unanimously.*

2. Garden City Community School

Petitioners filed a petition with the Boise School District on April 11, 2005. The Boise School District referred the petition to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission for consideration.

Matthew Shapiro, president of the Board, addressed the Commission. He also introduced other Board Members, including: Marty Monroe, Gail LaBoe, Barbara Gastin, Tom Tracy,

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and Julie Higgins. Mr. Shapiro described the process used by members of the Board to create the petition for the Garden City Community School. He explained that the members of the Board surveyed the community to gauge community support and educational priorities for Garden City residents.

Chairman Hammond asked staff for information regarding the Garden City Community School petition. Christine Ivie addressed the Commission regarding concerns, directing them to those listed in the staff memo. She also mentioned that if the petition includes grades 9-12 it needs to be stated that those grades will meet state graduation requirements. She also suggested revisions to their drug and alcohol policy and their weapons policy.

Susan Campbell, Commission Legal Counsel, said that the signatures included with the Garden City Community School petition are not verified as qualified electors within the Garden City city limits. Mr. Shapiro answered that they are willing to resolve any suggestions and clarifications raised by Legal Counsel and Staff.

Chairman Hammond opened the floor for discussion. Commissioner Donnelly noted that she was impressed with the petition and would like more information regarding the Mary Parker Follett Foundation and its role with Garden City Community School. Mr. Shapiro noted that the Foundation is not in a position to receive any financial gain from the school.

Commissioner Miller commented on the amount of philosophy in the petition asked Mr. Shapiro for more information on what the practical operations of the school will look like. Commissioner Miller used the "flex-time" provision in the petition as an example. Mr. Shapiro noted that they have taken into account where students are coming from, and that the beginning of the year will look more structured then after students have a chance to adapt to the new scheduling idea.

Commissioner Powell questioned representatives from Garden City Community School for more information regarding their budget and where they received their estimates. Mr. Shapiro answered that they created their budget by studying the Idaho Code and funding formulas, and also checked with the State Department of Education to review their numbers. Commissioner Powell noted that it would help the Commission to see more information on their budget at the next meeting.

Commissioner Donnelly commented on the interaction with the school and the community and the positive relationships that will build. She also asked about how the petitioners plan to handle increased liability/costs of keeping the facility open after-hours. Mr. Shapiro noted that they plan to share costs of utility, etc., and would use similar processes used by traditional public schools that stay open for Community Education purposes.

Commissioner Souza asked for more information on the multi-age classroom concept. Mr. Shapiro addressed the petitioners' belief regarding the age grading system and its use

limited use in their school. He also noted that the petitioners were aware of some of the pitfalls of ability-grouping and that Garden City Community School will have a wider latitude with which to work in to avoid those problems.

M/S (Goesling/Donnelly): A motion to continue the petition from Garden City Community School pursuant to Section 33-5205(2), Idaho Code, to provide petitioners the opportunity to work with staff in addressing issues and deficiencies identified in the staff memo. *Motion passed unanimously.*

3. Idaho Virtual Academy – Update and Amendments to Charter

The Public Charter School Commission authorized Idaho Virtual Academy on October 28, 2004. Idaho Virtual Academy came before the Commission to request an amendment to their charter. The proposed amendment would allow Idaho Virtual Academy to add the 9th grade to their charter.

Mr. Kent Higgins, member of the Board, addressed the Commission. Laurieann Shoemaker and David Myers were in attendance. Mr. Higgins explained the proposed changes to the Commission.

Chairman Hammond opened the floor for discussion. Commissioner Souza asked representatives from IDVA about expanding their grades while they are still handling situations with their Special Education program. Mr. Higgins answered that the hearing with the State Department of Education regarding their Special Education program was conducted this week and will have notification of decision soon.

Commissioner Souza asked IDVA representatives about the availability of Advanced Placement programs. Christine Ivie, Commission Staff, clarified that students can take AP tests, with or without taking the AP course. She also explained that some students could take concurrent credit classes with institutions of higher education, depending on agreements with their schools and local institutions.

Commissioner Miller asked representatives from IDVA about the range of courses that would be available for 9th grade students, including electives. Mr. Higgins answered that there will be multiple math classes, three English classes, a science or biology option, one history class, and one foreign language course. Mr. Higgins also noted that music and art courses are available as electives.

Commissioner Powell asked for staff and State Department of Education representatives for clarification regarding timing for issuing a decision about an additional grade to IDVA. Dr. Bob West from the State Department of Education answered that as soon as IDVA can bring new numbers to the State Department of Education they can calculate numbers for additional support units, etc.

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Commissioner Goesling noted that the budget hasn't been revised to add grade 9. Mr. Higgins answered that the absence of the budget was an oversight on the part of IDVA and that the revised budget was something that the Board of Directors looked at extensively. He noted that the new budget information could be provided to the Commission.

M/S (Miller/Souza) Defer decision on Idaho Virtual Academy until the June Commission meeting pending receipt of the revised budget. *Motion passed 5-1, with Commissioner Powell dissenting.*

Commissioner Powell noted that there wasn't a compelling reason to deny IDVA from going forward with adding the 9th grade.

Substitute Motion: M/S (Powell): Approve the amendment to the charter for IDVA for 2005-2006 school year for the 9th grade only. *Motion failed for lack of a second.*

Commissioner Miller asked if IDVA representatives would prefer to be approved each subsequent year for each subsequent grade. Mr. Higgins noted that they would be willing to come back each subsequent year, but on the other hand there are parents who would like to know what grade their students are going.

Chairman Hammond noted that he was in agreement with Commissioner Powell's comments that there aren't any compelling reasons to hold decision on the amendment considering their cooperativeness in working with staff and others to resolve past issues.

Commissioner Miller noted that his concern dealt with the outstanding loans and wanted to see the updated budget and projected revenues before approving a new grade.

4. Liberty Charter School – Update and Amendments to Charter

Karen Echeverria, Commission Staff, clarified the proposed amendments for Commissioners. She explained that Liberty Charter School was requesting several amendments to their charter. Some of the amendments were inadvertently left out of the materials presented to the Commission at the time Liberty was authorized. As a result, the Commission did not take action on those amendments so they are being brought back for review and consideration. The one new amendment is referenced in the priorities for attendance. Liberty Charter School is requesting that their attendance area be expanded to include the entire Treasure Valley.

Gayle O'Donahue and Sheila Bryant from Liberty's Board of Directors addressed the Commission. Ms. Bryant explained that there are students coming long distances to attend Liberty Charter and this would eliminate one level of preference. She also noted that there are far fewer options for Charter High Schools and Liberty Charter School offers grades 9-12.

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Commissioner Van Wart asked Liberty representatives if the amendment will affect their waiting list. Ms. Bryant noted that the waiting list won't change, as far as numbers, but it will allow them to have equal footing.

Chairman Hammond opened up the floor for public comment. Jan Sylvester and Cindy Schiller, members of the public, addressed the Commission.

Ms. Schiller addressed the Commission and spoke of her concerns regarding the current attendance area, and whether the area is the city of Nampa, vicinity of Nampa, or the Nampa School District. She also noted areas of the charter that need to be updated as well as concerns regarding transportation and what will be required of Liberty to transport students in their attendance area.

Ms. Sylvester noted the same concerns with the attendance area, and consistent references to their attendance area in their charter.

Ms. Bryant from Liberty Charter School again addressed the Commission. She suggested that the Board of Liberty would like more time to work with Commission staff in determining what is required of the school regarding transportation. Christine Ivie, Commission Staff, clarified that if a Special Education student is admitted, Liberty is required to provide transportation for that student.

M/S (Goesling/Powell): A motion to approve the amendment to the charter for Liberty Charter School for the 2005-2006 school year, excluding amendments to the Element 11 which includes information on the attendance area which will be brought back to the Commission at a later date. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioners noted the need to clean up language and check for consistency.

5. Compass Public Charter School – Update and Amendments to Charter

Karen Echeverria, Commission Staff, updated the Commissioners about the proposed amendments. Ms. Echeverria explained that representatives from Compass are proposing changes made to their agreement with their developer regarding temporary facilities.

Chris Jensen and Susan Luke addressed the Commission. Ms. Jensen summarized the proposed changes. The first two changes were mainly housekeeping changes that dealt with the Board of Trustees and changes to increase the enrollment from 32 to 33 for 6th and 7th graders. The third amendment dealt with their facilities. Ms. Jensen noted that Compass had originally planned to be housed in portable facilities with a three-year lease. Their developer noticed that there were a lot of "throwaway costs" involved with portable facilities and so Compass searched for an existing facility to lease. Compass has an agreement with Cherry Lane Christian Community Church in the city of Meridian for temporary housing.

M/S (Powell/Van Wart): A motion to approve amendments to the charter for Compass Public Charter School. *Motion passed unanimously.*

7. Falcon Ridge Public Charter School

M/S (Van Wart/Goesling): Motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to 67-2345(1)(d) to consider records exempt from public inspection. *A roll call vote was taken; motion passed unanimously.*

In executive session, the Commissioners considered records exempt from public inspection.

M/S (Van Wart/Goesling): To exit Executive Session and reenter open meeting. *Motion passed unanimously.*

Karen Echeverria, Commission Staff, explained that Commission staff observed some irregularities while attending the lottery for Falcon Ridge Public Charter School. Ms. Echeverria continued and explained that a letter was sent proposing corrective action to be taken by Falcon Ridge's Board, after which she received additional information about the lottery, which made it evident that the easiest way to correct the situation would be to redraw the lottery.

Commissioner Goesling commented that it is critical for the Boards of charter schools to be knowledgeable of the requirements of the law regarding charter schools and to not depend heavily on the Commission or staff for daily guidance.

M/S (Goesling/Donnelly): A motion to direct Falcon Ridge Public Charter School to void their initial lottery and conduct a new lottery in accordance with the terms set out in the charter and current state statutes and rules. *Motion passed unanimously.*

Susan Campbell, Commission Legal Counsel, asked for clarification regarding the motion. Ms. Campbell asked if the motion was to reopen enrollment and accept new applications, or just to redraw the names. Commissioner Goesling answered that the motion was not to reopen enrollment, just re-conduct the lottery.

6. Workshop – ISAT Testing

Carissa Miller, State Board of Education staff, addressed the Commission. Ms. Miller explained the history and development of the ISAT, how tests are administered, how data is used to help teachers and students in the classroom, and how the ISAT testing requirements apply to public charter schools.

Chairman Hammond adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.